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Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation

Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe

I. Introduction

1. The present report summarizes activities of UNODC with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe during the period under review (second half of 2013, 2014 and first quarter of 2015). It also presents recent developments concerning relevant initiatives in these regions.

2. The UNODC work in these regions is in line with the UNODC strategy (2012-2015) and the UNODC Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe, as well as UNODC thematic and global programmes and is complementary to the UNODC Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries, as well as with the Paris Pact Initiative.

3. In South-Eastern Europe, while the region has made much progress in the past years, a realistic assessment of threats, priorities and needs identified in the course of work in the areas of countering and preventing drugs, crime and terrorism demonstrate that it is crucial to ensure a rigorous path forward in fighting these challenges. In this context, UNODC's vision for the region both fundamentally supports UNODC's comprehensive goals in the fight against global crime, while reflecting the EU perspective held by potential future EU members in South-Eastern Europe. By positioning its efforts to ensure maximum complementarity with EU priorities for the region, best summarized through annual European Commission country progress reports, UNODC's efforts support the countries/territories of the

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region individually, as well as ensure and improve effective regional and transregional interconnectivity, taking advantage of UNODC's added value as a global actor.

II. South-Eastern Europe

4. The Balkan route continues to be among the most important heroin trafficking routes to Western and Central Europe. UNODC report *The Illicit Drug Trade through South-Eastern Europe*[1] (published in March 2014) divides the Balkan route of heroin into three branches. The northern branch traverses the Eastern Balkans (Bulgaria — Romania — Western and Central Europe), while the southern branch involves only one South-Eastern European country — Greece — and generally leads to Italy. The western branch refers to trajectories through the Western Balkans towards Western and Central Europe and involves both sea and land trajectories. Over the years, seizure volumes have been significant both at the start (Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran) and at the end (Western and Central Europe) of the Balkan route but they have declined recently, most notably in South-Eastern Europe. In 2012, the 10 countries and areas that comprise South-Eastern Europe seized less than 1 ton of heroin, a 10-year low. By contrast, 13.3 tons were seized "upstream" in Turkey that year and about 5 tons "downstream" in the route's destination markets in Western and Central Europe, suggesting that shipments are continuing to make it through South-Eastern Europe.

5. The core transportation network in South-Eastern Europe is multi-modal and includes road, rail and inland waterway links, along with a number of seaports, river ports and airports. Most drug trafficking is not multi-modal and road vehicles are the preferred mode of heroin transportation through South-Eastern Europe. Some official country reports, as well as large seizures of heroin in Turkey and in the destination countries in Western and Central Europe, suggest that large shipments are being trafficked both upstream and downstream along the Balkan route. But as there is no evidence of large seizures in South-Eastern Europe itself, there could be different explanations as to how heroin is trafficked though the region. Taken together, large seizures before and after South-Eastern Europe appear to indicate that the Balkan route remains a major conduit for heroin and that logistics for large shipments are exceedingly well organized.

6. South-Eastern Europe is seeing an expansion in the trafficking of Albanian cannabis. Cannabis herb seizures in the region doubled from 23 tons in 2011 to a 10-year high of 48 tons in 2012. As supply has increased, traffickers may be looking to develop and expand their supply chains into markets in Western and Central Europe. Profit margins are substantial, given the proximity between source and destination. In June 2014, the Albanian authorities concentrated operations on the large-scale cannabis cultivation in Lazarat, in the southern Gjirocastra region, where an estimated several thousand local people had been working on the plantations and had been involved in the harvesting and processing of the cannabis. The operation began on 16 June when the Albanian State Police sent in 800 police officers, special and rapid intervention forces, backed by armoured vehicles and seized 71,087 tons

[1] www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illicit_DT_through_SEE_REPORT_2014_web.pdf.

of cannabis, dismantled five processing laboratories, confiscated considerable quantities of arms and ammunition and arrested 50 persons. The Police continue with its grip on the cannabis production in Lazarat. The quantity of marijuana seized in 2014 exceeded the total quantity seized during the last 9 years (94 tons).[2]

7. Crime groups from South-Eastern Europe have established close connections with cocaine producers in South America and are active in direct trafficking to Western and Central European ports. Although little of this cocaine actually transits South-Eastern Europe, it cannot be excluded that proceeds from this trafficking are in turn impacting the region. In this way, transatlantic cocaine trafficking poses an indirect threat to South-Eastern Europe.

8. Western Balkans continued to strengthen cooperation with EU States in drug control. In May 2014, representatives of EU States and Western Balkans met in Brussels to engage in a dialogue on drugs. At that meeting, which was the first since the adoption of the joint declaration of the EU and the Western Balkans on strengthening cooperation in the area of drug control and updating the 2009-2013 action plan of the EU and the Western Balkans on drugs, participants discussed past achievements with regard to cooperation between the regions, as well as the most recent developments in drug monitoring and policy. The declaration was adopted by ministers of home affairs of EU and Western Balkan States on 20 December 2013 in Montenegro, demonstrating the commitment of all parties to strengthening national drug information systems.[3]

9. In December 2013, the Serbian police carried out a country-wide police operation, codenamed "Thunder", as part of the Government's resolution to clamp down on drug dealing and distribution networks in the country. Following this operation, the national police underwent structural changes with a view to improving its performance in the areas of fight against organized crime and drug trafficking.

10. The UNODC Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe (2012-2015) continued to support the national counterparts' efforts to apply international legal obligations, standards and norms and in strengthening the rule of law. Since October 2013, UNODC has carried out a large number of regional and national activities on drug related issues. In addition, the UNODC-WCO Global CCP, working in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro has undertaken multiple activities in the region.

11. Through its Regional Programme and Global Programmes, UNODC also participated in multiple events organized by its regional and international partner organizations and national counterparts: EU, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), South-Eastern European Law Enforcement Centre (SELEC), Centre for Security Cooperation (RACVIAC), the Secretariat of the Police Cooperation Convention for South Eastern Europe (PCC SEE), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative (RAI), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control

[2] Mini-Dublin Group Regional Report on Western Balkans, Brussels, 7 November 2014: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15145-2014-INIT/en/pdf.

[3] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.

of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC), Police Cooperation Convention for South Eastern Europe, South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Mini-Dublin Groups, Bled Strategic Forum, Treptower Group, the Ministries of Interior and Health and Statistical Offices of the respective countries participating in the Regional Programme and others

12. Furthermore, in addition to the above, UNODC has undertaken series of national activities in the region. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNODC supported national stakeholders in the development of a new National Strategy on Prevention and Supervision of the Abuse of Narcotic Drugs and the National Plan for the Combating the Narcotic Drugs Abuse, and supported an initial dialogue among forensic and expert analyses laboratories in the country and planning for capacity-building support by UNODC.

13. In Serbia, cooperation was mostly focused in the field of drug demand reduction. In December 2014, Serbia adopted the National Drug Strategy (2014-2021) with the Action Plan for its Implementation (2014-2017). The Strategy draws on the evidence base provided, in particular, by the "Mid-Term Review of the National Drug Strategy of the Republic of Serbia", a study prepared by UNODC.

14. On 11 April 2014 UNODC and WHO facilitated the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Health and the CSOs in Albania, focusing on delivery of services in drug treatment and care.

15. The Regional Programme is part of the UNODC drug control platform set-up within the UNODC Inter-Regional Drug Control Approach (IRDC)[4] and the inter-connectivity of the Regional Programme is ensured with the ongoing activities implemented within the framework of UNODC's programmes and initiatives addressing the Afghan opiates trafficking such as the Paris Pact Initiative. Within the initiative "Networking the Networks" UNODC coordinated a law enforcement inter-agency meeting in December 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. The initiative offers an innovative approach to confronting illicit drugs and crime and will link bodies such as the Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Centre (CARICC), the Gulf Criminal Intelligence Centre (GCIC), the Joint Planning Cell (JPC) and SELEC to create better coordination.

16. The Paris Pact Initiative, in collaboration with UNODC regional and interdivisional sections and programmes, including the Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe, organized four Expert Working Groups, which were also attended by partners from South-Eastern Europe. The Expert Working Group on Drug Demand Reduction (Vienna, October 2013); the Expert Working Group on Precursors (The Hague, November 2013); the Expert Working Group on Improving Bilateral and Multilateral Information Sharing and Coordination of Operations (Antalya, February 2014); and the Expert Working Group on Illicit Financial Flows (Vienna, April 2014). UNODC developed an analytical report that provides the first consolidated basis for the Paris Pact partnership to develop its understanding of the illicit economy and a draft delivery plan for technical assistance implementation.

[4] The IRDC forms an innovative drug-control platform for integrated regional programme coordination and for increased impact on the illicit trafficking of opiates and on transnational organized crime.

The Research and Liaison Officers (RLO) network includes positions located in Belgrade and Skopje.

17. Since August 2013, the Regional Programme Steering Committee held three meetings, identifying common work priorities, partnership and resource opportunities, as well as communication and coordination measures. Meetings of the Committee were used to brief and consult all key stakeholders on relevant developments and to foster commitment and continuous support for the Programme. The Committee acknowledged the good results of the substantive work and the improved communication channels, as well as the added value of the Programme for the EU accession. The Committee approves yearly workplans of the Regional Programme and endorses the reports on the delivery of these workplans.

18. The mid-term in-depth evaluation of the UNODC Regional Programme took place from September 2014 to April 2015. The results of the evaluation will be announced in mid-2015. UNODC work in South-Eastern Europe was also presented to the Standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of UNODC. The Executive Director of UNODC held a briefing to Member States on the UNODC Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe in January 2013 and met with the Austrian Minister of Interior and with the Minister of State for Local Government of Albania.

A. Organized crime and illicit drug trafficking

19. Bilateral cooperation in addressing drug trafficking in the region continued to intensify among the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In 2013, the Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Ministers of Interior of Montenegro and Serbia signed a protocol on the establishment of the Joint Centre for Police Cooperation in Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

20. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia signed a security agreement in November 2013 that established procedures for the exchange of information, police cooperation and measures to combat crime.

21. In December 2013 Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia opened the Center for Police Cooperation of the Ministries of Interior at the border crossing between two countries in Tabanovce.

22. In May 2014, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia adopted the National Strategy on Drugs 2014-2020 and the Action Plan 2014-2017.

23. In November 2014, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland signed the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation for implementation of the "British methodologies and practices for the collection and analysis of information".

24. In December 2013, Albania signed a cooperation agreement with Europol.

25. In September 2014, a bilateral agreement between Serbia and the United States of America on cooperation in counter narcotics and law enforcement was signed.

26. In July 2013, EULEX and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kosovo under UNSCR 1244 signed a Technical Agreement on Intelligence Sharing.

27. In November 2013, the Police Directorate of the Montenegrin Ministry of Interior completed the Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA)[5] for Montenegro. According to this report, trafficking and trade in narcotics is the main activity of the organized crime groups of Montenegro. Cannabis, heroin and cocaine are the most trafficked drugs.

28. The UNODC Report on Drug Trafficking through South-Eastern Europe[6] was launched on 18 March 2014 in Vienna, with follow-up presentations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Report provides a solid ground for law enforcers and policymakers in the region and beyond.

29. The support to strengthen national capacities and regional cooperation in countering money-laundering, financial analysis and investigations, asset tracing and financial intelligence has been integrated in the Regional Programme's approach to South-Eastern Europe. The Regional programme invested in the process of analysing the impact and threat of illicit financial flows on countries on the Balkan Route of heroin trafficking as a follow-up to report on drug trafficking through South-Eastern Europe. The respective report is to be finalized and launched in 2015.

30. In 2014, UNODC reached the agreement with the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the United Nations Country Team in Serbia to pilot the United Nations System Task Force on Transnational Organised Crime and Drug Trafficking as Threats to Security and Stability in the country with a view to further roll it out in other parts of the region. The first meeting of the United Nations Task Force took place in Belgrade on 26 January 2015.

31. The UNODC-WCO CCP, covering the ports of Durres (Albania), Bar (Montenegro) and — as of 2014 — Bijača (Bosnia and Herzegovina), carried out trainings, study tours, mentorship missions, provision of equipment, and other activities. In December 2013 a study visit was organized for officers of the Joint Container Control Unit (JCCU) from Durres to Rotterdam. In November 2014 Customs and Police officers of the Durres JCCU and prosecutors of the Serious Crime Prosecution office from Tirana made a study visit to the Italian port of Gioia Tauro. In December 2014, the Durres JCCU hosted officials from the Republic of Yemen and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia who got acquainted with the developments and implementation of the CCP with particular focus on cooperation between the Customs and Police. A number of national and regional trainings for selected officers from the ports of Durres and Bar were held; equipment was provided to the ports of Bar and Bijača; 13,200 evidence bags were handed over to the JCCU of the Durres port; mentorship and study visits to the ports in Albania, Montenegro and Ecuador were carried out.

32. As a result of the technical assistance through the CCP, the numbers of seizures at the Durres Port, Albania, increased in 2014 by 80 per cent compared to 2013. Since its inception the CCP at Durres Port has increased detections and

[5] www.mup.gov.me/upravapolicije/vijesti/136045/Uradena-Procjena-opasnosti-od-organizovanog-kriminala-SOCTA.html.

[6] www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/Illicit_DT_through_SEE_REPORT_2014_web.pdf.

confiscation of drugs and other illicit goods, including 23 kg of heroin, more than 5.6 tons of marijuana, and counterfeited goods valued at EUR 50,000 and US$ 150,000.

33. In 2014, Montenegro police seized a record 250 kg of cocaine in the port of Bar that was supposedly destined for Albania. In this context, and to discuss this seizure, a delegation from the State Police of Albania visited their counterparts in the Ministry of Interior of Montenegro with UNODC's support.

34. In March 2014, UNODC established an office in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in July 2014 a MoU was signed with the Government on the establishment of the Joint Container Control Unit in the Bijača dry port. In November 2014, CCP in Bosnia and Herzegovina commenced its implementation phase after a two-week theoretical training was held for the JPCU officers from the Indirect Taxation Authority (ITA) and the Border Police. Training also gathered observing officers from several other law enforcement agencies. In February 2015 in Mostar, a two-week practical training was organized for the JCCU, gathering officers from ITA and the Border Police.

B. Drug prevention and treatment, HIV treatment and care

35. South-Eastern Europe is not only a transit region along the Balkan route; it also faces consumption challenges in its own right. While estimated opiate user populations in most countries and territories in the region are relatively small, the combined regional user population is estimated at some 117,000 people, which compares well with the largest consumer markets in Western and Central Europe. Moreover, regional cocaine and ATS prevalence is indicated in some cases higher than the global average, but reliable data on local drug markets remains very limited.

36. The lifetime prevalence of illicit drug use in the general population in the Western Balkan region appears to be lower than the European average; however, in keeping with the situation in European countries generally, such use primarily involves cannabis, with greater proportions of young men than young women reporting experience of cannabis use. Most countries in the Western Balkans have produced empirical studies to estimate the size of populations who inject drugs, with data suggesting that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia may have the highest rates. However, given the variety of methodologies used, those estimates should be further developed to make them more reliable for comparison purposes. A quarter of all reported HIV cases in the region to date emanate from Serbia, where the largest populations of people who inject drugs in the region reside, and where HIV prevalence estimates among people who inject drugs are greatest (at nearly 5 per cent). While a quarter of cumulative HIV cases in the region are linked to injecting drug use, this is the case for less than 5 per cent of new cases since 2006.[7]

37. According to a joint estimate made by UNODC, UNAIDS, the World Bank and WHO, based on the most recent available data (2012), the problem of injecting drug abuse is evident in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The number of people

[7] www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2015/fs5/western-balkans-report.

who inject drugs who are also living with HIV was particularly high in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, where it was estimated that the prevalence of HIV among people who inject drugs was 23.0 per cent (compared with a global average of 13.1 per cent) and more than half of the people who inject drugs were estimated to be living with hepatitis C.[8]

38. On 25 June 2014, the National Survey on life styles of citizens in Serbia 2014 was launched in Belgrade, Serbia. According to the survey, the lifetime prevalence of any illicit drug use was 8.0 per cent in the entire population aged 18-64. Any illicit drug use in the last 12 months was less prevalent — 1.7 per cent of the whole population. The most frequently used illicit drug in the population was cannabis, the lifetime use of which was reported by 7.7 per cent of the respondents. Lifetime prevalence for heroin in the total population aged 18-64 was 0.4 per cent and the last 12 months prevalence rate was 0.1 per cent.[9]

39. The prevention and treatment of drug use component of the UNODC Regional Programme for South-Eastern Europe has been taken forward in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia resulting in an increased number of families and children trained in accordance with the UNODC best practices and broader services for treatment and care for people with drug dependence.

40. In 2013, in the area of prevention of drug dependence, UNODC trained 30 facilitators who would provide further trainings within UNODC courses. UNODC also trained families and children from 13 schools in the region, supported national institutions and civil society. In the area of treatment of drug dependence, UNODC trained 22 trainers who would provide further training and almost 400 experts from various fields of health care, held workshops and provided assistance to national authorities.

41. In 2014, in the area of prevention of drug dependence, UNODC trained 15 facilitators who would provide further trainings within UNODC courses. UNODC also expanded prevention portfolio in Serbia with a new Skills for adolescence pilot programme in cooperation with the Lions Club International Foundation, and within the initial stages of its implementation, five workshops were convened and resulted in a pool of 75 trained educators, outreach to 21 elementary school and over 1,300 students. The results of UNODC's implementation of Lions Quest Skills for adolescence programme in Serbia were presented at United Nations Headquarters at the Annual Lions Day with the United Nations on 7 March 2015.

42. UNODC organized a Regional Prevention Policy Makers Conference to present the results of work under the prevention programme "Strengthening Family Programme 10-14" (September 2014, Belgrade, Serbia) and promote UNODC international standards on drug abuse prevention.

43. In the field of treatment and care of drug dependence, UNODC achieved important results in extending the network of trained professionals and government counterparts through: trainings conducted for 67 medical professionals in Albania; 35 professionals in Serbia; 33 medical students in Skopje; round table on treatment standards in Albania.

[8] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.

[9] www.batut.org.rs/download/novosti/2015FebruarIgreNaSreculzvestajEng.pdf.

44. On 21 March 2014, the First National Drug Treatment Conference in Albania was held providing a platform for 140 primary care specialists and CSOs to discuss drug treatment and new therapeutics (organized by the Mother Teresa University Hospital Centre, Ministry of Health, UNODC and WHO) focusing on the interdisciplinary fields of drug use, drug therapy, treatment and care. A new publication "The Multidisciplinary Treatment of Drug Use and Alcohol" was introduced at the conference.

45. In Albania, UNODC provided support to the signing of the MOU between the Ministry of Health and drug treatment service providers (NGOs).

46. Grants were distributed to four regional centres in Serbia (Belgrade, Kraguljevac, Niš, Novi Sad) to support innovative solutions related to sustained recovery management, i.e. resocialization and reintegration as part of the comprehensive system of drug abuse treatment.

47. In May 2014, UNODC provided the Course on elements of psychosocial treatment of drug dependence for the students of the Medical Faculty of Saints Cyril and Methodius University of Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

48. In January 2015, UNODC initiated the Strengthening Family Programme 10-14 in Bosnia and Herzegovina in corporation with Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

III. Eastern Europe

A. Organized crime and illicit drug trafficking

49. In April 2014, an agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation on precursor chemicals came into effect, aimed at strengthening cooperation to prevent the diversion of precursors from legitimate trade by monitoring trade in precursors between the parties and providing mutual assistance to prevent diversion.[10]

50. In May 2013, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted new rules for handling narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors in medical establishments, which substantially reduced the number of administrative obstacles to the use of these substances for medical purposes. The Government, through a decree adopted in September 2013, reduced the list of documents required to apply for licences required for activities involving controlled substances. In August 2013, the Government approved its State policy strategy on narcotic drugs for the period until 2020, which focuses on treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts based on international best practices.[11]

51. In January 2014, a presidential decree was adopted in Belarus on State regulation of the circulation of poppy seeds, which substantially restricted the supply of those seeds as a raw material for illicit markets in the country.[12]

[10] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.
[11] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.
[12] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.

52. In 2013, the Government of the Republic of Moldova transferred the Anti-Drug Department to the newly created General Police Inspectorate and established two regional units for the north and south of the country. The Administrative Code of that country was also revised to increase the sanctions for driving under the influence of alcohol, narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances or other substances with similar effects.[13]

53. Limited availability of heroin in Belarus and the Russian Federation led to an increase in abuse of locally produced, and readily available, substances such as acetylated opium and poppy straw extract. In 2013, 53 per cent of those listed on the State drug abuse register in Belarus had consumed homemade opium produced either from poppy straw or seeds. Also, the number of persons in Belarus who abuse methadone that has been obtained illicitly increased by 12.6 per cent.[14]

54. UNODC is working with the Russian Federation within a Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries, which focuses largely on counter-narcotics and the rule of law in order to respond effectively to drug trafficking and organized crime, but also envisages a component on health and impact/trends analysis across the region. In addition, the Russian Federation and UNODC are collaborating within the project on Counter-Narcotics Training of Afghan, Central Asian and Pakistani Law Enforcement Personnel, which has been successfully implemented from 2006 to December 2014. UNDOC and the Russian Federation are negotiating a new project to be launched in 2015 for the continuation of this project.

55. Another example of successful regional cooperation between UNODC and the Russian Federation is the implementation of a project completed in December 2014, which provided training for 72 Afghan drug police officers in the Domodedovo training centre. The training delivered was a successful experience and a new phase is being prepared to be launched in 2015.

56. In June 2014, UNODC established its presence in Belarus for the first time, through the placement of a National Officer who will be responsible to implement HIV/AIDS prevention activities. UNODC and Belarus have been expanding their strategic partnership in the last two years in different aspects related to the UNODC mandate.

57. In May 2013, the UNODC Executive Director visited Belarus to discuss ways to strengthen the joint collaboration. During this official visit to Minsk, the Executive Director visited the International Training Centre (ITC) and formally opened an International Conference on Combating Trafficking in Persons, jointly with the Minister of Interior of Belarus (MoI). As a follow-up to the high-level mission, UNODC delivered a training workshop in Belarus at the ITC on the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking in August 2013. One of the main outcomes of this mission was Belarus's request for UNODC technical assistance to strengthen the capacities of the ITC and include topics related to organized crime and drug control, including issues of addressing health and social needs of people who inject drugs (PWID). Subsequently, a number of UNODC missions were undertaken during 2014-2015 to evaluate formulate a project proposal to assist the ITC.

[13] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.

[14] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.

58. In December 2014, a Presidential Decree was adopted to take urgent measures to counteract the illegal drug trafficking. The Decree requests the Government to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan of effective measures to combat drug trafficking, drug prevention and social rehabilitation of drug users, by March 2015. In this context, and as requested by the Belorussian counterparts, UNODC submitted a set of proposals for consideration to be included among the initiatives of (Presidential Decree) "National Comprehensive Plan of effective measures to combat drug trafficking, drug prevention, social rehabilitation of drug users" in March 2015.

59. In Ukraine, UNODC operational activities on HIV/AIDS continued to be undertaken and are expanding in scope.

60. The UNODC-WCO CCP under the Black Sea Segment was initiated in both Ukraine and Moldova during 2013. Assessment missions were made to both countries during 2014.

61. In August 2013 the Government of Ukraine approved a new Strategy of the national policy on drugs for the period until 2020, prepared with the support of UNODC, Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe. The Strategy is aimed at solving drug-related problems in society and at protecting public health and national security from the spread of drug abuse and drug-related crime. The innovative direction of the Strategy focuses on reducing drug demand, by prevention, overcoming stigmatization, treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependent people.

62. In June 2013, UNODC Office in Ukraine signed a MoU with the Inter-agency Scientific-Research Centre on the Problems of Combating Organized Crime under the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine. The MoU serves as a framework for cooperation between UNODC and the Ukrainian Inter-agency Scientific-Research Centre, with the aim of facilitating collaboration on key areas of interest related to UNODC mandate, promoting regular dialogue and the exchange of information, data collection and the dissemination of best practices and tools.

63. UNODC organized a study visit to Lisbon, Portugal for 7 Ukrainian officials in February 2014. Portugal was chosen as the destination because of the successful outcomes of the local drug policy reforms that de-penalized drug users and begun providing treatment as alternative to imprisonment.

64. Ukraine and UNODC continue to cooperate under the framework of the Paris Pact Initiative — a partnership to counter traffic in and consumption of Afghan opiates. The UNODC Office in Ukraine is facilitating research and analysis on the trafficking routes. With the help of the UNODC Data Monitoring Platform of Afghan Opiate Trade Project (AOTP), Law Enforcement of GUAM Countries collected information about 3,252 cases of Individual Drug Seizures (IDS).

65. In May 2012, UNODC launched a project aiming at strengthening the capacities of the GUAM Member States to cooperate at the national and regional levels in combating money-laundering as well as in seizing and confiscating crime proceeds; and to strengthening cooperation, at both the national and regional levels. UNODC PO in Ukraine in Cooperation with GUAM Secretariat prepared "Compendium of drug-related statistics concerning GUAM" and published it on the official site of GUAM Organization. During the reporting period the Anti-Money-Laundering project finalized a report on review of the mechanisms of

inter-agency cooperation in GUAM Member States for prevention and combating "money-laundering", as well as seizure and confiscation of proceeds from crime. Two more regional workshops specially tailored for Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova were conducted to meet the deficiencies and specific needs identified in the report.

66. In the context of Moldova-EU visa liberalization regime in July 2014, the representatives of the Ministry of Interior of Moldova participated in meetings of the working group on visa liberalization regime, held in Brussels. They discussed drugs demand and supply in Moldova.

67. Moldova and Ukraine continued cooperation with the representatives of the EU assistance mission to the borders of Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM). In 2013, Moldova and Ukraine undertook the special operation "OVIDII" aimed at documenting drug-related crimes at the borders of Moldova and Ukraine.

68. The action plan for the implementation of the 2011-2018 National Drug Control Strategy in Moldova expired in 2013. The National Drug Control Commission of Moldova requested UNODC to provide technical assistance and expertise to review the evidence-based drug policy arrangement in Moldova. At the same line, the National Drug Observatory and the Ministry of Interior of Moldova requested assistance in enhancing the national drug reporting system, as part of the National Action Plan Moldova-EU Programme, regarding EU visa liberalization regime.

69. In October 2013, UNODC PO in Moldova technically assisted the national authorities in assessing the drug policy segment. The Czech Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction was selected to undertaken a capacity-building and assessment mission took place in October 2013, with a purpose of assisting Moldovan national authorities in drafting the 2014-2016 Action Plan on the Drug Control Strategy and enhance the national drug information system and the national reporting capabilities (National Drug Observatory).

70. Furthermore, UNODC PO in Moldova provided support to the Secretariat of the National Drug Control Commission, including through provision of small equipment.

71. In 2014, UNODC-WCO CCP conducted a successful interlocution with the Moldavian authorities which resulted in signing of a MoU on cooperation in the framework of the Programme and first introductory course for 22 officers of the named services. Experts of the Programme realized an assessment of the facilities of Giurgiurleste Sea Port for establishment of the Port Control Unit (PCU). In the beginning of 2015, the partners continue work on preparing for the second (practical) stage of the training for the customs and border guard officers and purchasing equipment for the PCU.

B. Drug prevention and treatment, HIV treatment and care

72. The levels of opiate abuse in Eastern Europe, supported by the supply of heroin from Afghanistan, remain high. An increase in the proportion of admissions

for treatment that were for cannabis abuse (from 8 per cent to 15 per cent) could be observed in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe between 2003 and 2012.[15]

73. Belarus and Ukraine have significantly scaled up access to opioid substitution therapy.[16]

74. Abuse of "ecstasy" in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe has remained above global average levels, with an annual prevalence rate of 0.6 per cent. The Russian Federation reported significant increases in the abuse of amphetamine, methamphetamine and "ecstasy" in 2013. Belarus also reported a significant increase in the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants during the same period, except for "ecstasy", which remained at the same level. A survey conducted in the Republic of Moldova in 2012-13 showed an increase in the abuse of methamphetamine.[17]

75. Eastern Europe has a significantly higher prevalence of injecting drug abuse, as well as of HIV among people who inject drugs, than the global average. Within those subregions, relatively high rates of injecting drug abuse were observed among the populations of Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

76. According to a joint estimate made by UNODC, UNAIDS, the World Bank and WHO, based on the most recent available data (2012), relatively high rates of injecting drug abuse were observed in the Russian Federation (2.29 per cent), the Republic of Moldova (1.23 per cent), Belarus (1.11 per cent) and Ukraine (0.88-1.22 per cent).[18]

77. In context of expansion of the scope of the joint collaboration, and in the field of HIV prevention, under the framework of the Global Fund, UNODC fielded a mission to Belarus in September 2013, to assess the country's current situation and response related to the HIV, focusing on the prevention and treatment in prisons. Following the mission, UNODC has launched the HIV prevention activities and recruited a National Expert in June 2014. The UNODC HIV project focuses on the increase of coverage of comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment and care services for people who inject drugs and in prison settings through outreach services and on strengthening the partnership between the law enforcement, health and CSOs in provision of harm reduction services for HIV. In this context, the ITC can also be associated in these initiatives and host coordination and/or workshops.

78. Since then, a number of activities have been implemented in Belarus. In particular, a training on stigmatization, discrimination, human rights issues, and the needs of key populations for Law Enforcement officials and CSOs representatives (October 2014); an assistance in getting registered ENHR project in Belarus aimed at the promotion of harm reduction services; a workshop on Estimating Size of PWID Populations in Belarus (March 2015).

79. UNODC contributed to the procedure of supporting Belarus in developing new HIV/AIDS State Programme (2016-2020) and preparing a proposal for the

[15] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.
[16] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.
[17] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.
[18] www.incb.org/incb/en/publications/annual-reports/annual-report-2014.html.

consequent round of the GFATM financing (2016-2018), advocated for the inclusion of the provision on creation an intersectorial scheme of PWID readdressing to treatment and care into the National Plan of the anti-drugs measures; as well as assessment the need in amending health legislation and related norms in order to continue the HIV interventions among PWID after the end of the GF grant.

80. For 2015, UNODC plan to support the national health authorities responsible for HIV/AIDS monitoring and evaluation in conducting Behavioural Sentinel Surveillance among IDUs and prison inmates. The major part of the UNODC activities in Belarus for 2015 will be associated with the implementation of the UNODC Training Manual for law enforcement officials on HIV services provision for PWID into training process and integration into the curricula of the national educational institutions.

81. The Eurasian Professional Association of Addiction Medicine in cooperation with UNODC Ukraine, All-Ukrainian Narcological Association and the Clinton Foundation, organized the first scientific and educational Forum of EPAAM in Kiev.

82. In 2013, in the context of EMCDDA strengthening cooperation with countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy, 40 representatives and potential candidates of the National Drug Observatory of the Reitox network participated in the seminar organized with the support of European Commission (TAIEX).

83. With the purpose of enhancing the capacities of the resource experts in Moldova on latest evidence and learn about the international best practices on medication assisted treatment, harm reduction and psychosocial support on 24-25 June a Medical Forum on Drug Dependence Treatment and HIV Prevention among people who use drugs in the community and prisons, was organized jointly by UNODC and Pompidou Group.

IV. Recent regional initiatives

A. South-Eastern Europe

84. The following paragraphs provide a number of examples of the most recent initiatives related to combating drug trafficking and related crimes undertaken by UNODC in the region. On 9-11 December 2013, a Meeting on "Prevention and Suppression of Transnational Organized Crime in Southeast Europe – Convergence of Theory and Practice" was held in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and brought together national heads and senior experts of criminal investigation units and academia, whose research focus is on the prevention, detection and investigation of transnational organized crime.

85. In February 2014 in Belgrade, Serbia, UNODC participated in the meeting of the South Eastern European Regional Steering Group on Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Regional Steering Group meeting, chaired by the Regional Cooperation Council and UNDP, is a part of the South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) governance structure and provides political and strategic guidance and ensures regional ownership.

86. On 13-14 February 2014 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, UNODC participated in the 4th meeting of the PCC SEE. As part of the established in 2013 dialogue with the PCC SEE Secretariat, the UNODC team discussed common areas for cooperation, in particular the UNODC-WCO CCP operating in the region.

87. On 29 May 2014 in Bucharest, Romania, UNODC participated in the meeting of Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) States, organized by the Romanian Chairmanship of the SEECP.

88. On 29 May 2014 in Bucharest, Romania, UNODC participated in the 8th Meeting of the Council of SELEC along with over 60 representatives of the law enforcement institutions from the SELEC Member States and guests from INTERPOL, RCC, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States.

89. On 26-28 June 2014 in Rakitje, Zagreb, Croatia, RACVIAC, UNODA and the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, organized a seminar on Effective Practices of the Implementation of UNSCR 1540 gathering 30 participants, including representatives of the RACVIAC member countries, 1540 Committee, UNODC, IAEA, OPCW and OSCE.

90. Police training by ICITAP, with lecturers from Northwestern University was held on 18 August 2014 in Pristina, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244. The ten-week session training "School of Police Staff and Command", started in the Kosovo Academy for Public Safety, where 42 senior police officials attended from all countries in the region. Besides the officials of the Kosovo Police, the training was also attended by the police officials from the region.

91. On 1-2 September 2014 in Bled, Slovenia, UNODC participated in the annual meeting of the Bled Strategic Forum.

92. On 23-25 September 2014 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, SELEC held the Workshop on Tackling Drug Trafficking where 65 experts from SELEC Member States and the United States discussed forfeiture investigations and money-laundering related to drug trafficking.

93. On 23-24 September 2014 in Durres, Albania, UNODC participated in the First Regional Meeting of the South East Europe Firearms Expert Network (SEEFEN).

94. On 8-9 October 2014 in Ohrid, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, an Expert Drug Enforcement Roundtable was held by OSCE, the Ministry of Interior and UNODC focusing on the quality of the investigation and prevention of crime associated with drugs, the inclusion of forensic scientists with their research.

95. On 3-6 November 2014 in Pristina, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, the Regional Border Security Conference was held. The Conference was organized by Kosovo Border Police and Customs and the United States Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) programme.

96. On 18 November 2014 in Pristina, Kosovo under UNSCR 1244, a conference was held by the OSCE and Kosovo Police for law enforcement officers, government representatives, and academics from the Western Balkans, Turkey and several EU countries on combating organized crime and transnational threats.

97. On 11-12 February 2014 and 4-6 March 2015 in Belgrade, meetings on Facilitation of Common and Coordinated Measures in the Western Balkans under the DCAF Border Security Programme were held, with participation of the signatory countries to the PCC SEE. The participants agreed on annual plans of common and coordinated operations in 2014 and 2015.

98. On 11 November 2014 in Skopje, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Regional conference "Police reforms within the criminal justice system and its implementation" was held by OSCE and Ministry of Interior. The conference was attended by representatives of the police of all countries of the region and was divided into six working sessions covering all aspects of police reform in the context of the criminal justice system.

99. On 2 December 2014 in Rome, Italy, Ministerial Conference "IPA 2013 Western Balkans" was held by the Italian Ministry of Interior focusing on results to be achieved by a project "IPA 2013 Western Balkans" which will be implemented in the following three years focusing on prevention and fight against transnational crime and corruption associated with cross-border implications with an aim of enhancing law enforcement on strategic and operational levels.

100. On 9 December 2014 in Belgrade, Serbia, Heads of Customs Authorities of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro met to discuss cross-border cooperation and ways to improve in order to counter illicit trade by organized crime groups. The Croatian Customs Authorities offered their assistance to the Customs Authorities in the region to prepare for harmonization with EU regulations in the pre-accession period.

B. Eastern Europe

101. In September 2013, within the framework of the EU project "Heroine Route" and with the organization of the Moldova and the MIA of Georgia, meeting of the officials of Ukraine, Turkey, Azerbaijan, England, France, Germany, Europol, EUBAMM, CARICC, GUAM, SOCA and DEA was held to discuss issues of regional and transregional cooperation among law enforcement agencies in combating drug trafficking, exchange of operative information, establishment of communication network, investigation methods, routes of drug trafficking as well as the issues of international cooperation in this regard.[19]

102. On 16-17 December 2013, a session of the working subgroup on combating illegal distribution of drugs was held at the GUAM Secretariat in Kiev, Ukraine. The session was attended by relevant representatives of the law enforcement agencies of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Ukraine, as well as by UNODC in Ukraine.[20]

103. In May 2014 in Moscow, Russian Federation, a Ministerial Meeting to counter illicit drugs was held under the framework of the G8 presidency. This Meeting was preceded by three expert-level meetings: "Reducing the supply of drugs through police cooperation", "Alternative development for drug production regions" and

[19] Mini-Dublin Group Regional Report on Eastern Europe and Caucasus, Brussels, 17 December 2014. http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16958-2014-INIT/en/pdf.

[20] http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16958-2014-INIT/en/pdf.

"Decriminalisation of youth environment by reducing the demand for drugs through rehabilitation and re-socialization of drug users". UNODC participated in the three events. During these meetings, the participants highlighted that more efforts were to be invested in regional and global cooperation. The Conference issued a Declaration and recommendations.